DARKBLADE'S BACK – AND THIS TIME IT'S SERIOUS!

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

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Inside this issue...

DarkBlade

plus: DWARFLORDS • PAX IMPERIALIS • SHADOWFAST

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

IT'S FASCINATING being stuck out here in the Warp. Yes, that accursed Ultramarine, Baneblade, is a constant pain in the place where your saddle rubs. But there are benefits, oh yes. All manner of bizarre and arcane devices are adrift in the Warp, wrenched from lost starships or cast like driftwood into the vast sea of glorious Chaos when a planet has succumbed to my masters' foul power. Just today I came across a most miraculous device, a piece of arcane transportation technology far in advance of anything I'm used to. And, by Khorne, I'm going to use it to wave goodbye to that damnable Baneblade once and–

By the Emperor! *Hold it right there, Chaos scum! I overheard that, and by the Holy Throne if anyone's leaving the Warp it's me. Give me that device or you'll taste my chainsword! That's better. Now, get out of my sight while I examine this thing. My, what a strange contraption. It must have been lost in the Warp for a thousand years. But now it's mine and I can use it to return home! 'Ye must Press!' it says. Here goes nothing! What...?! It's almost as if it has come alive. A sort of rhythmic purring, as if ancient motors are coming alive. No, not really purring. More like... ticking! Noooo! Gutspew, you vile, disgusting, filth-ridden vermiiiiiiiiinnn~~~~*

Ho! You think yourself a mighty genetically-enhanced warrior – yet you can't even recognise an innocent chunk of high explosive until it goes off in your hand! I keep telling you: the ways of Chaos are deceitful indeed! I said I'd be waving goodbye to you and lo, my prediction has come true! Bye-eee! Have a nice trip! Ouch, what a loud bang. Oh look, a flying Space Marine. Pretty fireworks! Oooh! Ahhhh! Oooh!

He's the msn. Kal Jerico returns next month.

Inside this comic...

DWARFLORDS
Trying to get back to Chaos-threatened Karak Kadrin, our three heroes find themselves blown off course – into darkest Sylvania!

PAX IMPERIALIS
The last Adeptus Arbites stronghold on Tannen's World is besieged by a vile Genestealer cult!

SHADOWFAST
In the final episode... Trapped on the deathless Blighted Isle, Shadowfast must find a way to reunite the mystical staff and orb!

AND DARKBLADE'S BACK!!

GAMES WORKSHOP

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SOMEWHERE IN THE WARP

NOW, WITH THAT damnable Space Marine out of the way, I can finally sit down and read some of your miserable letters. By Khorne, you human worms really are a lively lot, aren't you!

• How great is the Power of Corruption that emanates from the Warp! And how ignorant are the sons of the Imperium who struggle to resist it! All must fall before Slaanesh! All must praise the Master of Pleasure.

Ehem... Excuse my exaggerated enthusiasm but as Farseer of Straahann I feel it is my duty to defend myself against these pathetic, insignificant humans. Do they not realise that their faebie whining voices are but flickering sparks, inconceivably small in the Sea of Chaos? To begin with I would like to remind Missionary Paul Vasaitis that all light comes to an end, but darkness remain forever.

As for the irritating little Paul Davis, if an addressless Chaos Worshipper is a fool, then stupid is the son of man who tells his enemies which county he resides in! Would Middlesex benefit from a personal visit from the great Keeper of Secrets? My final complaint is directed towards Gutspew himself. I recommend, oh companion in Chaos, that you do a little research into Eldar names, for I, Karranie Straan, most powerful of all Chaos Eldar, am a *woman!!!!* I assure you, any more mistakes and you will feel the wrath of my powerful Best wishes, oh worthless spawn.
— Karranie Straan

✻ Ahh! A fellow indulger in the delights of Chaos. So you called upon Slaanesh to disguises yoer true identity last time; a cunning plan, worthy of myself. I like this Eldar Farseer, she has her allegiances right.

• Just had to comment on *Warhammer Monthly*. I simply love it! It gives us gemers great opportunities to create scenarios, gives us great entertainment, good stories and something to look forward to every month.

Daemonfuge is GREAT! The art is just so cool. I'm also starting to like Dwarflords, even though I can't stand Dwarfs, (fat little bearded things). Daemonfuge and Darkblade are still the best stories.
— Jone Larsen, Stavanger, Norway

✻ Good point about those horrid little Dwarfs. They taste foul and their beards get stuck in your teeth!

• I wish to raise a number of points regarding this excellent publication. *1)* Why are there no High Elf stories? If the foul spawn of Naggaroth are parmitted a story, should not the true Elves get at least two stories? *2)* Simon Holliday has no right to compare either of you to a fish. (Scabbs should be compared to a worm.) *3)* Include more stories about Space Wolves and Ultramarines. *4)* More assassin stories! The artwork is great. Death to Chaos!
— Jennifer Power, High Elf Mage Lady & Declan Power, Bloodletter moron

✻ Death to Chaos? Snivelling wretch of a High Elf! As your Bloodletter companion can tell you, Chaos is immortal, your race is doomed. There will never be High Elves in this comic whilst I'm in control - not unless they're stuck on great horrible spikes!

• I want [a model of] Inquisitor Hand... it would be great to have him in my Dark Angels army. Hand would give readers one of their favourite charcaters and an inquisitor model where there is none. He would make a great centrepiece for a Daemon-slaying army! Yay!
— Josh Levine

✻ Another lap dog of the Imperium, how I despise them! Daemon-slaying, eh? You should be so lucky. Did you not see the terrible fate that befell Inquisitor Hand?

• For the past eleven years I have been a reader of comics and although I have often experienced a passing interest in Warhammer, I could never quite get to grips with painting the models. I have, however, read the Codexes and have a fair idea of what is going on in the Warhammer universe and was interested to hear news of a monthly comic based there.

There is, I feel, something lacking in this comic and I think part of this is that there is no real introduction to the characters. This may be all fine for those readers who are already big Warhammer fans and know the history inside out, but for those who are new to the comic it is a problem. There isn't even any explanation of the differences between the Warhammer and Warhammer 40K stories.

Another complaint I have is the lack of depth to the characters. The only problems that they ever face are more and more people who they will inevitably kill with ease. Perhaps if they where taken down a peg or two and given a real nasty opponent from time to time. Batman has the Joker, Superman has Lex Luthor, Wolverine has Sabretooth, etc., but no enemy in *Warhammer Monthly* has ever lasted long enough to become an ongoing threat. So what I'm saying is harder enemies, longer stories and more interesting dialogue.

Having said all that, the stories that stick in my head so far are Daemonfuge and Bloodquest, helped along by excellent art from Walker and MacNeil. Kal Jerico is another character showing a degree of promise under the guidance of Gordon Rennie, an old favourite from his Missionary Man days. This comic has great potential and I would hate to see it go to waste.
— Mark Mclernon, Co. Down, Northern Ireland

✻ Sorry, what? I'm afraid to admit I wasn't listening; I was too busy looking back and reading all about those accursed Inquisitors of the Imperium and those yucky Adepta Sororitas in the last few issues.

• I am a fanatical comic and Games Workshop figure collector and when I found out that you were going to produce a comic I thought it was wonderful. After ten months of collecting *Warhammer Monthly* I still love it. My favourite stories have been Bloodquest, Daemonfuge and The Samos Sanction. I have one suggestion. Have more Blood Angel stories. Blood Angels, Blood Angels, Blood Angels, Blood Angels, Blood Angels, Blood Angels, Blood Angels, more BLOOD ANGELS!!!!
— Bosri Hussain, Perth, Australia

✻ Yes, yes, we get the message! Perhaps the start of Bloodquest Book II in issue 17 will silence yoer whining. Curse those Blood Angels!

✻✻✻✻✻✻✻

CONTACT ME, MIGHTY BILEOUS GUTSPEW, AT: Warhammer Monthly, The Black Library, Games Workshop Ltd: Willow Road, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK

OR USE COSMIC THOUGHT TRANSFERENCE VIA publishing@games-workshop.co.uk

DWARF LORDS 6: Dead of Night

SCRIPT/ART PAUL DAVIDSON ✦ LETTERS GORDON ROBSON

SOME DAYS WEST OF KARAK KADRIN, IN THE LAND OF SILVANIA, A CASTLE STANDS SILENTLY WAITING FOR THE SUN TO SET FOR WHEN NIGHT COMES, DARKNESS WALKS FREELY IN SHADOW

ETHGRIM, BOWLI AND OLIF WAKE TO FIND THEMSELVES IN A PLACE WHERE MORTALS FEAR TO VENTURE.

OOH, ME HEAD!

WHERE ARE WE BY GROM?

SEARCH ME GLOOMY PLACE, WHEREVER IT IS...

"I THINK.. WE WERE FLYING.. ON A GRIFFON?

"WE MUST HAVE GONE OFF-COURSE. SOMETHING BROUGHT US DOWN.

"SOMETHING - BY GRIMNIR!

"KARAK KADRIN! WE WERE ON OUR WAY TO SAVE KARAK KADRIN FROM THE ARMIES OF CHAOS!!

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE AND FAST!
I'M NOT GOING WITHOUT ME AXE
SO LET'S FIND IT AND GET MOVING! KARAK KADRIN IS IN GRAVE PERIL
SUN'S GOING DOWN WE MUST HAVE SLEPT ALL DAY
I DON'T THINK OUR HOSTS COME ALIVE UNTIL NIGHTFALL
WHOEVER OUR HOSTS ARE, I DON'T RECKON "ALIVE" WILL BE THE WORD TO DESCRIBE 'EM
THIS WAY
TOO QUIET FOR MY LIKING
CREEPY, TOO

I'D FEEL BETTER IF I HAD ME HAMMER
WHERE IS EVERYBODY?
SSHH / THERE'S A CORRIDOR OVER THERE
THIS WAY FEELS WRONG UURR / SOMETHING SMELLS OF ROTTEN FLESH.
I CAN HEAR SOMETHING SOMETHING'S COMING /
AHA / RIGHT UNDER OUR NOSES IT'S SO DARK, I DIDN'T NOTICE OVER HERE QUICKLY
COME TO ETHGRIM
THAT'S MORE LIKE IT / NOW LET'S GET OUT OF HERE AND ON TO KARAK KADRIN
GROM / CAN'T YOU SMELL ROTTEN FLESH
IT IS THE UNDEAD YOU SENSE, MORTAL

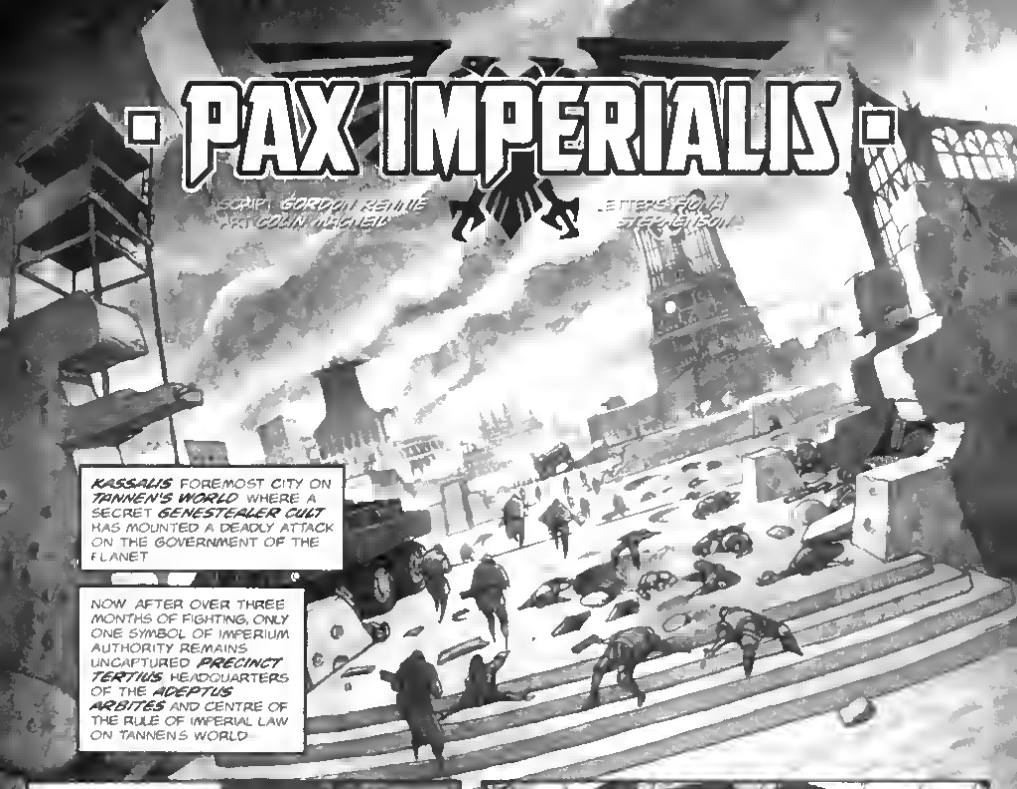
SHOOM
A LICHE-THING!
WELCOME!
WE'RE NOT DEAD, SO WHAT'S THE STORY?
YOUR JOURNEY THROUGH THE VORTEX IS KNOWN TO ME IN THE SLUMBER OF MORTAL HELL I'VE WATCHED YOU FOOLISH DWARFS FIGHT YOUR WAY HOME
SO?
I'M ON THE PATH TO BECOMING A GOD, A PATH THAT WILL CROSS WITH YOURS ON TWO MORE OCCASIONS FOR I HAVE FORSEEN YOUR DEATHS AND, SAD TO SAY, YOU DO NOT DIE HERE
MY FOUL COMPANIONS, HOWEVER, DO NOT SHARE MY INSIGHT. AND EVEN NOW THEY ARE GATHERING TO ATTEMPT TO ADD YOU TO THE RANKS OF THE DEAD

BUT KNOW THIS THOUGH I CANNOT KILL YOU, I CAN GAIN FAVOURS FROM MY MASTERS IN OTHER WAYS - BY DELAYING YOU ! YOU'RE TOO LATE TO SAVE YOUR PRECIOUS KARAK KAOR -
THUK!
SORRY, LADS, BUT ALL THAT POMPOUS KRUT GETS RIGHT UP MY BEARD.
BOWL!, I'M IMPRESSED
THWP!
LET'S MAKE THIS QUICK, LADS YOU CAN ONLY BE MADE DEAD ONCE
SSSTOPP URGLE... THEM... GRRG !
HAS NO ONE EVER TOLD YOU ? DON'T SPEAK WITH YOUR MOUTH FULL !
TIME TO KICK SOME POINTY TEETH IN

NICE BASH 'N' ALL, BUT OUR PRESENCE IS REQUESTED AT A MORE IMPORTANT PARTY.
AYE, THIS ONE'S DEAD!
KSH!
KSH!
KSH!
COME ON! KARAK KADRIN IS STILL DAYS AWAY, AND THE FORCES OF CHAOS AREN'T GONNA WAIT!
YUK! I HATE WATER
HA! 'BOUT TIME YOU HAD YER ANNUAL BATH!
SHUT IT, BOWL! HAS NO ONE EVER TOLD YOU YOU'RE A REAL PAIN IN THE NECK!
TO BE CONTINUED...

PAX IMPERIALIS

SCRIPT: GORDON REMME
ART: COLIN MACNEIL
LETTERS: FIONA STERNBERG


KASSALIS FOREMOST CITY ON TANNEN'S WORLD WHERE A SECRET GENESTEALER CULT HAS MOUNTED A DEADLY ATTACK ON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE PLANET
NOW AFTER OVER THREE MONTHS OF FIGHTING, ONLY ONE SYMBOL OF IMPERIUM AUTHORITY REMAINS UNCAPTURED PRECINCT TERTIUS HEADQUARTERS OF THE ADEPTUS ARBITES AND CENTRE OF THE RULE OF IMPERIAL LAW ON TANNENS WORLD

PULL BACK! KEEP THEM AT BAY AND PULL BACK TO THE HALL OF JUDGEMENT!
MAGISTER LOOK! THERE!!
GENESTEALERS! GENESTEALERS COMING UP BEHIND US!
STERN TO MARSHAL VOLKER THEY'RE TUNNELLING UP FROM BENEATH US WE ARE CUT OFF WITH NO RETREAT POSSIBLE
PAX IMPERIALIS LORD MARSHAL WE GIVE OURSELVES WILLINGLY IN SERVICE OF THE EMPEROR'S PEACE!
PAX IMPERIALIS! PAX IM---

THE HALL OF JUDGEMENT, THE HEART OF THE PRECINCT FORTRESS WHERE THE SURVIVING DEFENDERS PREPARE TO MAKE THEIR LAST STAND
OPEN THE DOORS! MAGISTER STERN AND HIS MEN ARE TRAPPED OUT THERE!
NO!
WE DO NOT THROW AWAY OUR LIVES TO SAVE THOSE ALREADY DEAD IF WE DIE, WE DIE HERE DEFENDING THE WORD OF THE EMPEROR'S LAW
SHROOOM!
MARSHAL, THE DOORS!
CHECK WEAPONS! TAKE UP DEFENSIVE POSITIONS REMEMBER THE PROMISE OF PAX IMPERIALIS
'NO SERVANT OF THE EMPEROR DIES UNAVENGED, NO ENEMY OF THE EMPEROR ESCAPES UNPUNISHED!'

VANDIRE'S SINS! IT'S THE PATRIARCH! THE BROOD-FATHER ITSELF HAS JOINED THE BATTLE!
KILL AS MANY AS YOU CAN! BLEED THEM DRY! PREPARE THE WAY FOR THE VENGEANCE OF OUR BROTHER JUDGES!
AAAAGH--!
KILL, KILL ME IF YOU MUST, ABOMINATION...IT WON'T MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE TO THE FATE OF YOU AND YOUR CHILDREN
RETRIBUTION IS ON ITS WAY! I DIE KNOWING OUR SACRIFICE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN!

THREE DAYS LATER TANNEN'S WORLD IS RECAPTURED BY ADEPTUS ARBITES RELIEF FORCES UNDER THE COMMAND OF MARSHAL BYZANTANE—
RETRIBUTION IS ON ITS WAY I DIE KNOWING OUR SACRIFICE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN
AND YOUR ORDERS? DO WE CONTINUE OUR SEARCH FOR THE CULTS BREEDING NESTS?
NO WE DISENGAGE AND RETURN TO OUR ORBITING TRANSPORTS
BREAK OFF PSYCHIC CONTACT PRIMARIS ADEPT LET THE RECORD SHOW THAT THOSE HERE DIED IN THE SERVICE OF THE EMPEROR IT IS ONLY THROUGH THEIR SACRIFICE AND THE DEATH OF THE PATRIARCH THAT WE WERE ABLE TO RETAKE THIS WORLD SO QUICKLY
THE EMPEROR'S SERVANTS DO NOT DIE UNAVENGED, NOR DO HIS ENEMIES ESCAPE UNPUNISHED I STAND IN JUDGEMENT OF KASSALIS AND I FIND IT WANTING—
THIS CITY IS TAINTED IT MUST BE SCOURED CLEAN RAZED TO THE GROUND, THE VERY SOIL IT STANDS ON STERILISED OF ALL LIFE
'ONLY THE HONOURED DEAD WILL REMAIN HERE LYING WHERE THEY FELL AMONGST THE BONES OF THEIR ENEMIES
LET WHAT HAS HAPPENED HERE STAND FOREVER AS A TESTAMENT TO THE EMPEROR'S PEACE AND A WARNING TO THOSE WHO WOULD DEFY IT
PAX IMPERIALIS
THE END

DarkBlade
BOOK II
HEAR NOW OH WEARY TRAVELLER THE SECOND CHRONICLE OF THE DARK ELF MALUS KNOWN AS DARKBLADE REVENANT... PAWN OF DAEMONS, SCOURGE OF LIFE...
... DESTROYER
Part One:
The Tower of Sithras Elgol.
Script: Dan Abnett
Art: Kev Hopgood

NO ONE KNOWS, OR CARES TO IMAGINE HOW THE GLASS TOWER OF THE WARLOCK SITHRAS ELGOL CAME TO BE BUILT
SIMPLY THEY KNOW THAT FOR GENERATIONS HIS EVIL HAS BLIGHTED THE BORDERS OF NORSCA AND TROLL COUNTRY
MANY TIMES THE LOCAL WARLORDS HAVE ASSEMBLED THEIR WARRIORS TO PUT AN END TO HIS POWER
MANY TIMES THEY HAVE FAILED
NOW A BAND OF MERCENARIES, TAKING FOR PAY A MASSIVE TRIBUTE, ATTEMPTS THE TASK.
BUT THE TOWER IS GUARDED BY MUCH MORE THAN ANCIENT CURTAIN WALLS AND UNDEAD THINGS
SHOW YOURSELF, WARLOCK !
AYE ! SHOW YOURSELF THAT WE MAY KILL YOU ! WHERE IS YOUR VAUNTED POWER NOW, WRETCH ?
HERE, FOOLISH MORTALS!
POWER UNDREAMED OF! MYSTICAL LIGHTNING THAT RIPS THE SOUL FROM THE BODY...
AND LEAVES NOTHING ALIVE
SEE HIM NOW, MALUS DARKBLADE, GHOST WARRIOR, SOULESS ONE
FOR TEN YEARS HE HAS LED HIS MERCENARY BAND SO GREAT IS THEIR RESPECT FOR HIM THEY WOULD FOLLOW HIM TO THEIR DEATHS
TODAY THEY HAVE
IF YOU WANT A JOB DONE...

EEARRGHH !
FWWAMP!
GNNH !
LET'S TRY THAT AGAIN, SHALL WE ?

SITHRAS ELGOL ! WARLOCK ! WHERE ARE YOU, DEAD MAN ?
YOU HEAR ME ? YOUR REIGN IS OVER ! DEATH HAS COME FOR YOU !
I AM A BOUGHT MAN, PAID IN GOOD GOLD TO END YOUR WAYS ! I WILL NOT FAIL !
AND I WILL TAKE DELIGHT IN BUTCHERING YOU !
YOU STOLE THE SOULS OF MY MEN, BUT YOUR MAGIC HAS NO POWER OVER ME ! I HAVE NO SOUL TO TAKE !
I AM YOUR DOOM, SITHRAS ELGOL ! I AM MALUS DARKBLADE ! KNOW MY NAME, SO YOU WILL KNOW WHAT TO SHRIEK AS MY SWORD CUTS YOU ASUNDER !
SO YOU ARE MALUS, THE SOULLESS ONE ? WELL MET !
I HAVE EXPECTED THIS MEETING ! HAVE HEARD MUCH ABOUT YOU

THE STORIES TELL OF YOUR RUTHLESSNESS, MALUS DARKBLADE THEY ALSO SPEAK OF YOUR INTELLIGENCE
THEREFORE TRUST WE MAY COME TO AN UNDERSTANDING BEFORE MUCH MORE UNPLEASANTNESS OCCURS
YOU HAVE TEN HEARTBEATS TO MAKE YOUR CASE
I DEAL IN SOULS, MALUS THIS WARP GEM ALLOWS ME TO STEAL, SHRED AND COVET THEM.
THE FACT THAT IT HAS NOT STOPPED YOU PROVES YOU HAVE NO SOUL TO TAKE
PERHAPS I CAN HELP YOU GET YOURS BACK
YOU COULD DO THAT ?
HOW ?
FIRST, TELL ME HOW YOU CAME TO LOSE IT ? I HAVE HEARD STORIES, OF COURSE. OF THE DEMON TZARKAN. BUT I DON'T TRUST LEGENDS
TEN WINTERS PAST, I WAS CURSED BY THE FIEND TZARKAN, WHO WANTED ME TO FREE HIM FROM AN ETERNITY OF ARCANE IMPRISONMENT
I DID THIS THING. AND IN GRATITUDE, HE TOOK MY VERY SPIRIT
"GRATITUDE"? HA HA HA HA ! YOU DO HAVE WIT, DRUCHII ! I LIKE YOU !

WILL YOU LIKE ME WHEN I SLIT YOUR THROAT ?
ULPP !
SLAY ME AND YOU GET NOTHING ! MAKE A PACT ! A PACT NOW ! I WILL HELP YOU IF YOU DON'T KILL ME ! SWEAR IT, IF YOU EVER WANT TO SEE YOUR SOUL AGAIN !
I SWEAR ! I WILL NOT HARM YOU
THE WARP GEM WILL REUNITE YOUR SOUL ALL YOU MUST DO IS FIND IT AGAIN
THAT IS SORCEROR'S WORK !
THE WARP GEM'S WAYS ARE INDEED COMPLEX, BUT I UNDERSTAND IT...

... THAT IS WHY YOU NEED ME MALUS DARKBLADE THE CEREMONIES OF POWER ARE INSCRIBED INTO MY VERY FLESH !
SO... DO WE HAVE A PACT ?
SO IT SEEMS
SO IT SEEMS
THEN LET US GO ! THERE IS NO TIME TO LOSE
YOU HAVE WAITED LONG ENOUGH !
INDEED
INDEED I HAVE

I MUST TELL YOU.. THIS FILLS ME WITH EXCITEMENT I HAVEN'T SET FOOT OUT OF THE GLASS TOWER FOR SIX GENERATIONS IT FEELS GOOD TO HAVE A PURPOSE!
OUR QUEST TOGETHER WILL BE CHALLENGING, MALUS !
SPITE ! HSSST!
HRRNGG...
BUT YOU SWORE YOU WOULD NOT KILL ME !
I SAID I WOULD NOT..
NOOOO!

HAVE YOU FEASTED WELL ON OLD, ROTTEN FLESH, SPITE?
GNNRR!
GOOD LAD!
WE HAVE THE WEAPON TO USE AGAINST THE ACCURSED TZ'ARKAN...
... AND THE MEANS TO USE IT.
LET TZ'ARKAN BEWARE! MALUS DARKBLADE IS COMING FOR HIM!
TO BE CONTINUED

An interview with Dan Abnett

by Warwick Kinrade

IF YOU'RE A fan of the various magazines put out by the Black Library, there's one name you cannot have failed to notice: Dan Abnett. Not only is he the author and creator of such cracking strips as Darkblade, Titan, and Inquisitor, he also turns his typing fingers to short stories in Inferno! Readers will recognise his name from his tales of Gaunt's Ghosts, Gilead the doomed High Elf, and the Knights of the White Wolf.

With the return this issue of everyone's favourite Dark Elf, Malus Darkblade, we were keen to talk to him. So when Dan called in to the Black Library offices recently, we cornered him and subjected him to some very rigourous questioning on your behalf.

WARHAMMER MONTHLY: *How long have you been writing comics?*

DAN: I've been writing professionally for just over eleven years. By that, I mean getting paid for it.

WHM: *If you can remember back that far, what was your first published story?*

DAN: A little tale called 'Killer Instinct', which was in Action Force Weekly (that's the pint-size GI Joe stuff). I wrote it on spec and it was accepted. It was completely rewritten by the time it was printed – but it was accepted.

WHM: *After your success with Action Force Weekly, what other famous strips have you written?*

DAN: Over the past ten years I've had a go at pretty much everything. You name it I've probable written something for it. I've done Dr Who, Star Trek, Ghostbusters, Thundercats, Rupert the Bear, Mr Men, Batman, Superman, Conan the Barbarian, Punisher, Judge Dredd, Terminator, Rogue Trooper... *[PAUSES FOR BREATH.]* Iron Man, Doctor Strange, Green Lantern, Aquaman, the Avengers. The list goes on and on...

WHM: *It's probably easier to name the characters you haven't written! But of that list which are the stories you're proudest of?*

DAN: Erm, that's quite difficult. Iron Man, maybe. The stuff I'm proudest of would probably be things I've been involved with from the start, creating or co-creating. Lords of Misrule, Knights of Pendragon, Hypersonic, Resurrection Man and Sinister Dexter. Sinister Dexter, the hitman strip for 2000 AD, is pretty much a fave.

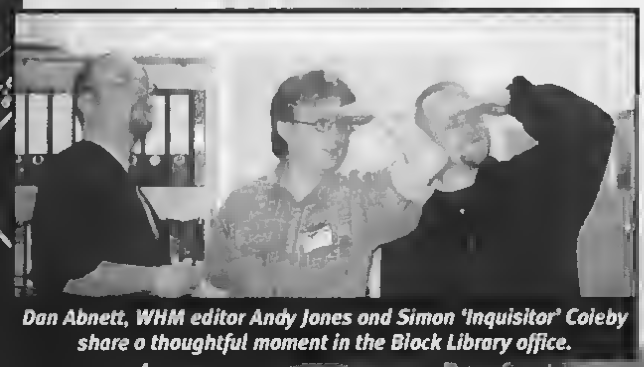
WHM: *How did you get into writing? Is it something you always wanted to do or did you just fall into it?*

DAN: I always wanted to write. Or draw. To tell stories, anyway. As a kid, I used to draw pictures and then write stories about them. One day, someone showed me some comic strips and I realised there was a way to do both things at once. For years, I wrote and drew my own comics. A long time afterwards, I found out you could actually do it professionally, and *bingo!* By then, the drawing had fallen by the wayside and writing was the thing for me.

WHM: *Have you got any tips for aspiring comic writers out there?*

DAN: The main thing is to write and get people to read your stuff. Once they've read it, listen to any comments they have, especially the negative ones. You'll learn more from these than praise. Write again. Write, write, write.

It's important to write what you want to read. It's also important to write how you want to write,



Dan Abnett, WHM editor Andy Jones and Simon 'Inquisitor' Coleby share a thoughtful moment in the Black Library office.

not how Neil Gaiman writes or how Terry Pratchett writes. Write for the sheer hell of it.

If you want to try submitting scripts, send to your favourite companies, like Games Workshop, Marvel or whoever, and request a set of submission guidelines. Always enclosa an SAE. Make sure you read the guidelines and submit working according to them, not to some guidelines you might have imagined reading. If the guidelines say 'no Kal Jerico ideas' don't send Kal Jerico ideas, even if you think yours are the best yet. Wait at least a month before chasing submissions. Expect criticism – in fact, encourage criticism. Do not expect to sell your first piece. Expect to have to keep trying and do keep trying. Write. And even when you've sold work, don't sit back and think 'I've made it'. You never stop learning.

***WHM:** When you are writing a script, do have a clear image of what you think it will look like in the end, or do you leave that to the artists?*

DAN: Usually I have a picture in my head, in terms of storytelling, otherwise I couldn't write it to begin with. I visualise the characters too, but that's really where the artist takes over. It's usually a pleasure to see how it's all worked out.

***WHM:** So what makes a good comic story?*

DAN: A writer, an artist and a patient editor. *[LAUGHS.]*

***WHM:** Have you been learning your interview style off Kev Walker? Expand on that answer a little.*

DAN: Okay, seriously, I'll get a little more technical now. You must dynamically visualise a 'W'. The 'W' is your story structure. The story starts on a dramatic high, then drops into scene-building exposition. You then build to another peak, again on another blockbuster moment. Now drop away again into more exposition and build, and then go for the big finish. If the story's longer, you might need more than one W. A double W! For a short story you can use a V instead, or perhaps a V and a W. Or is that a car? Mr Men stories are always M shaped, because you want to end on a soothing happy-ever-after for a bedtime story. Never try writing a Q.

***WHM:** So, if you could write a story for any comic character who would it be?*

DAN: The Mighty Thor, for, verily, I feeleth like writing a great saga and delivering it unto yon editor, quothing, 'Lo! This be mine story!'

***WHM:** So Thor's your favourite comic character?*

DAN: Nah! I always loved Iron Man and Conan, and Daredevil, because he was such a nutty idea. Classic Judge Dredd is hard to beat. I have very fond memories of a 2000 AD strip called The VCs – it was big space war stuff with art to die for!

***WHM:** Of all the characters you write for Warhammer Monthly and Inferna!, who's your personal favourite – and why?*

DAN: You've gotta like Malus Darkblade. He's so nasty and bitter. And Inquisitor Defay is a bit of a dude too. I love writing Hekate and his Titan crew but – I know they're not comic characters – I guess my current fave has to be Colonel-Commissar Ibram Gaunt and his doughty Ghosts of the Tanith First and Only, Feth take 'em! They're like children to me. *[SMILES BROADLY WITH A DISTURBING PATERNAL GRIN.]*

***WHM:** You've writing a novel featuring Gaunt and the Ghosts. Tell us about it.*

DAN: Yes, it's my first novel. It has a working title of 'First and Only'.

***WHM:** What is it about then? Give us a sneak preview.*

DAN: OK. It's set on a Forgeworld called Fortis Binary, which has been taken over by Chaos. There's lots of politics and in-fighting between the Imperial Guard commanders. Gaunt's arch rival, Commander Dravere, is trying to get Gaunt out of the way so he can take all the glory. I'm just putting the finishing touches to it.

***WHM:** How did you find writing the novel, compared to writing comic scripts? There's a lot more words in a novel for starters. Did it start to drag or did it just flow?*

DAN: It flowed. Like a long flowing line of big Ws and the occasional enormous V. I enjoyed writing it.

WHM: *Let's move away from writing. Have you ever had any other interesting jobs or have you always been a writer?*

DAN: I once worked as a stunt double in the Scandinavian adult movie business. Can I say that? It's not true but it sounds good.

WHM: *Moving on rapidly... let's try the old staple: what's your favourite movie?*

DAN: Oh please! Nominations would include Some Like It Hot, Empire Strikes Back, A Matter of Life and Death, This is Spinal Tap, Raising Arizona, Ferris Bueller's Day Off, Magnificent Seven, but I could never open the envelope and read the winner.

WHM: *What was the last book you read?*

DAN: I have an annoying habit of having several books on the go at the same time. Latest batch included Gates of Eden by Ethan Coen, which was outstanding, and 1066: The Year of Three Battles by Frank McLynn. You can guess what that was about. Actually, it's a brilliant read, one that would probably appeal to most of your readers.

WHM: *Which other writers, comics or otherwise, do you really rate?*

DAN: Alan Moore, Douglas Coupland, Jonathan Carroll, Iain Banks (with and without the 'M'), Tim Powers and Martin Cruz Smith, and I have huge fondness for some of the old pulp writers: Edgar Rice Burroughs, Ray Bradbury and John Buchan.

WHM: *Let's complete the set. What's your favourite food, and favourite music?*

DAN: Sushi. Oh, all right then, maccaroni cheese. As for music, blimey, Ben Folds Five, Fun Lovin' Criminals, Eliza Carthy, Talking Heads, lots and lots of classical and folk – and Rush for old time's sake.

WHM: *So, let's go the whole hog! If you were trapped, all alone on a desert island, what eight records would you like to keep you entertained?*

DAN: Sheesh! The Vatican Rag by Tom Lehrer, Man on the Moon by R.E.M... Naive Melody by Talking Heads... My Philosophy by Ben Folds Five... The Big Hill and Little Hill by Planxty... Saturn from Holst's Planets Suite... Look What I Found in my Beer by The Beautiful South and I've Got You Under my Skin by Sinatra.

WHM: *Let's assume you've got the complete works of Shakespeare and the Bible. Name two other books you'd like to wash up on the beach.*

DAN: Dandelion Wine by Ray Bradbury and Greenmantle by John Buchan.

WHM: *You're also allowed one luxury item on your desert island. What would it be?*

DAN: Easy: a Peter Abnett six-string, Gibson body-plan guitar. No question. My pa was one of the great instrument makers. A luthier, no less. He was really famous!

WHM: *So you've got your records, books and guitar, but would you be able to survive all alone on the island? Could you build a shelter, hunt for food, etc? Or would you try to escape?*

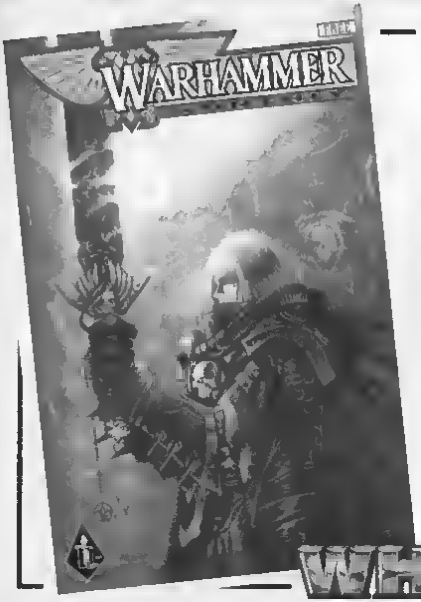
DAN: Could I survive? Yeah! If I had a ream of paper, a pen and a sharp knife I could do anything. So where's Sue Lawley?

WHM: *Ahem! Back in the real world, what is your ambition? What would you like to do next?*

DAN: Write some more comics.

WHM: *Sounds an excellent idea! Thanks, Dan.*

DARKBLADE RETURNS THIS ISSUE; LOOK OUT FOR TITAN BOOK II SOON!



— WARHAMMER MONTHLY IS A YEAR OLD ~ AND WHITE DWARF'S THROWING A PARTY!

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WHITE DWARF

THE STAFF POSSESSES AND DRIVES HIM ON
THE STAFF GRANTS HIM THE POWER OF COMMAND OVER THE ELVEN DEAD
THE STAFF IS HIS GIFT AND HIS CURSE
THE STAFF HAS DRAGGED HIM TO THIS BLEAK REALM OF DEATH
HE IS SHADOWFAST, WARDANCER THIS IS THE BLIGHTED ISLE!
IT IS A TWISTED AND TORTURED PLACE, A SUNDERED REALM, DOMINATED BY THE GREAT SHRINE OF KHAINE AND THE WEAPON WHICH LIES WITHIN. A REALM OF ANCIENT CONFLICT, WHERE TORTURED SPIRITS STILL DO BATTLE!
THE FINAL CHAPTER
SHADOWFAST
SCRIPT MICHAEL BROWNE ✦ ART SIMON HARRISON LETTERS GORDON ROBSON

BY AENERION, BY CALEDOR, SLAY THEM! DRIVE THEM INTO THE SEA!
WHERE IS THE ALTAR? WHAT SORCERY CLOGS MY SENSES?
MY LORD, I SENSE A CHANGE IN THE BALANCE OF MAGIC A GREAT DOOM THREATENS!
A RIFT HAS BEEN OPENED, BRINGING THE DARK ELF SCUM-
A LIVING ALLY TO JOIN THEM!
HOW CAN THAT BE? WE FIGHT THE ETERNAL WAR! NO ROOM FOR THE LIVING IN THIS HELL BLASTED REALM!
NEVERTHELESS, URATHE HELLSTAR IS HERE, AND HE WIELDS THE ORB OF MALDRAGNIR!
AETHIR, ELTHOND, WHAT KIND OF ELF IS THIS?
NO! IT CANNOT BE!
I AM SHADOWFAST OF LOREN, WARDANCER OF EQUOS, AND IT SEEMS I WALK IN THE SHADOW OF DEATH

THERE, BY THE ORB, THERE HE IS AND HE HAS THE STAFF!
CALM YOURSELF, HELLSTAR
BUT WE MUST REUNITE STAFF AND ORB! TELL YOUR WARRIORS SO
HE WILL BE OURS SOON ENOUGH, AND, IF YOU ARE RIGHT, WE WILL ESCAPE THIS MIST SHROUDED SPIRIT REALM FOREVER!
IF YOU ARE WRONG, WELL, I MAY NOT BE ABLE TO KILL YOU IN THIS DEATHLESS PLACE
BUT I CAN PROMISE YOU AN ETERNITY OF PAIN AND SUFFERING!
SOUND THE CHARGE! LET US REUNITE STAFF AND ORB!
YES, YES, I HAVE WAITED TOO LONG!

HELLSTAR! I WILL TEAR YOUR TWISTED HEART—
NO! NO! KEEP BACK! STAFF AND ORB MUST NEVER BE UNITED!
SHADOWFAST! WELL MET!
YOU MUST FLEE! STAFF AND ORB TOGETHER HAVE THE POWER TO COMMAND ALL THE ELVEN DEAD OF THIS REALM THEY WILL BE COMMANDED BY HELLSTAR TO ASSAULT THE WORLD OF THE LIVING!
BUT I HOLD THE STAFF SO I AM CURSED TO COMMAND THE ELF DEAD!
NOT HERE, SHADOWFAST! IN THE REALM OF DEATH THE TWO MUST BE COMBINED IT IS THEIR ANCIENT PURPOSE NOW FLY!
DIE AGAIN, FEEBLE LORD MY SWORD RELISHES YOUR FLESH!
SHADOWFAST, GIVE IT UP GIVE ME THE STAFF!
UNNURGH!

FEEL THE CALLING OF THE ORB OF MALDRAGNIR, SHADOWFAST YOU CANNOT ESCAPE!
YOU WILL NEVER HAVE THE STAFF!
KILL THEM. SLAUGHTER THEM ALL. HE IS GETTING AWAY!
YOU DO NOT HAVE THE POWER OR SKILL TO STAND BETWEEN A WAR-DANCER AND HIS PURPOSE!
SCHLAKK!
SHADOWFAST, YOU HAVE NOWHERE TO GO!
THEN I WILL PROTECT THE STAFF WITH MY LIFE!

FLEE ! FLEE !
WHERE WILL YOU GO, WOOD ELF ? WE HAVE ALL ETERNITY !
NO MORE, BY KURNOUS !
HELLSTAR, I AM COMING FOR YOU !!
SCHLAANG !!
ULURGH !
SWOOSH !!

SHIZZZZK!
NOOOOOO!
NOOOOOO! THE STAFF IS MINE!
WITH IT I WILL LEAD THE ELF DEAD TO ULTHUAN I WILL COMMAND —URKK!
YOU TREACHEROUS DOG! DIE!
AS LONG AS THE STAFF IS HERE, THE VORTEX BETWEEN THE DEAD AND THE LIVING WILL REMAIN OPEN!
THERE, BY ISHA! THE WAY IS SEALED!
NOT SO FAST, SCUM!
YOU'LL NOT ESCAPE ME SO EASILY!
SCHOKK!

I LIVE! AFTER A THOUSAND YEARS I LIVE! BY THE GOD OF MURDER NOW THERE WILL BE A RECKONING!
UNGH! IT CANNOT BE!
I WILL NOT ASK, I WILL PLUCK THE STAFF FROM YOUR STILL-TWITCHING FINGERS!
ACKK! NO!
SCHLANNG!
STAFF ORB AND SWORD OF KHAINE! ALL WILL BE MINE!
THEN I WILL CALL FORTH THE UNDEAD OF THIS ISLE AND MARCH IN TRIUMPH UPON THE CURSED FOPS OF ULTH-HUURGGH!
YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
SCHLOKK!
HA! I LIVE!
UNGH! BUT BUT HOW?!
NO ONE CAN DIE TWICE-AND MINE WAS A DEATH MOST HORRIBLE!

YOU... WILL BE THE FIRST TO DIE... BY KHAINE'S SWORD!

AIIIIEEEEEE! IT BURNSSSSS!
NOOOOOOO!

KARRRROOOOOMM!!

IT IS DONE
THE STAFF AND ORB ARE DESTROYED AND THE VORTEX HAS BEEN CLOSED

"IT IS OVER"
THE END